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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a fourth generation rancher of Meadows Valley, ID, and have lived in the area over the course of more than fifty years. I have also served in the Idaho Army National Guard as a helicopter pilot. My family has been closely tied to Idaho's forests, with my grand uncle Jim W. Farrell overseeing Payette National Forest from 1941-1945 as its supervisor for the Forest Service and later as the director of the Pacific Northwest region, and finally ending his career as a GS16 overseeing America's reforestation efforts.

I'm writing in support of the Stibnite Mine proposal put forward by Midas Gold Corporation. I would like to see jobs brought to the region and the old mine cleaned up, and I believe that Midas has a good plan for doing both. I've surveyed the site with the people involved in the Midas project and have seen firsthand the issues facing the current site and the way that Midas hopes to improve the situation. The destruction of the salmon waterway that occurred in the 1930s is unfortunate, and Midas's long term goal of re-creating a natural river will secure a permanent waterway that lasts beyond the project's life. Heavy metals from the old operations continue to leach into the nearby water, a problem that could be mitigated by Midas's cleanup operations. I believe that this environmental damage is probably not drastic enough to compel government agencies to invest the resources needed to fully clean up the site, so that the situation is unlikely to improve quickly without involvement from the private sector. The project to clean up the site, restore the salmon waterway, and start producing gold again will require a fair amount of labor and is likely to generate hundreds of good paying jobs for many years to come. Midas expects that approximately 25 to 30% of the construction workforce will consist of Valley County residents, and that approximately 50% of the employees during operations will live in Valley County, which, along with the additional indirect employment, will constitute a sizable benefit to the local economy.

My impression of Midas's plans is that they are thorough, thoughtful, and environmentally responsible. The company's board is made up of a range of talented and respected individuals of good reputation and strong credentials. I hope that the Forest Service can conduct a thoughtful review of the project and broker an arrangement that will ensure the environmental restoration and end-of-operations environmental plans as put forward by Midas are realized. Given the nature and history of the site, I believe that the private sector is the best option for repairing the environmental damage while being a source of economic prosperity for the region. I urge the Forest Service to give the proposal its full consideration.